

RESIDUALLY TORSION-FREE NILPOTENT ONE RELATOR GROUPS

JOHN LABUTE

ABSTRACT. We show that the group $G = \langle x_1, \dots, x_m, y_1, \dots, y_n \mid u = v \rangle$ is residually torsion-free nilpotent if $v \in \langle y_1, \dots, y_n \rangle$, $v \neq 1$, $u \in A = \langle x_1, \dots, x_m \rangle$, $u \in \gamma_d(A)$, u not a proper power mod $\gamma_{d+1}(A)$, where $\gamma_k(A)$ is the k -th term of the lower central series of A .

In memory of Gilbert Baumslag

In [1] Azarov proves that the group

$$G = \langle x_1, \dots, x_m, y_1, \dots, y_n \mid u = v \rangle$$

is residually a finite p -group for any prime p if $u \in A = \langle x_1, \dots, x_m \rangle$ is not a proper power and $v \in B = \langle y_1, \dots, y_n \rangle$, $v \neq 1$.

Let $\gamma_k(A)$ be the k -th term of the lower central series of A . If we strengthen the condition on u by requiring that $u \in \gamma_d(A)$ but not a proper power mod $\gamma_{d+1}(A)$ we obtain the following result which extends a result of Baumslag and Mikhailov (cf. [2], Theorem 5).

Theorem 1. *If $u \in \gamma_d(A)$ and u is not a proper power mod $\gamma_{d+1}(A)$ there exists a central series (G_i) in G such that the quotients G_i/G_{i+1} are torsion free and the intersection of the groups G_i is 1. In particular G is residually torsion-free nilpotent.*

A sequence of subgroups $G_i (i \geq 1)$ is said to be a central series for G if $G_1 = G$, $G_{i+1} \subseteq G_i$, $[G_i, G_j] \subseteq G_{i+j}$. To construct the required central series we will make use of the Magnus embedding of the free group $F = A * B$ into the Magnus algebra M of formal power series in the non-commuting variables $X_1, \dots, X_m, Y_1, \dots, Y_n$ with integer coefficients which sends x_i into $1 + X_i$ and y_i into $1 + Y_i$.

Let e be an integer greater than the integer d in Theorem 1. If

$$f = \sum a_{i_1 \dots i_k} Z_{i_1} \cdots Z_{i_k} \in M$$

is a sum of distinct monomials $Z_{i_1} \cdots Z_{i_k}$ with $a_{i_1 \dots i_k} \in \mathbb{Z}$ ($k \geq 0$) and Z_i an element of $\{X_1, \dots, X_m, Y_1, \dots, Y_n\}$, we define a valuation v on M by

$$v(f) = \min\{a + eb \mid a_{i_1 \dots i_k} \neq 0\}$$

where a and b are respectively the number of the X_i and Y_i in $Z_{i_1} \cdots Z_{i_k}$. In particular we have $v(X_i) = 1, v(Y_i) = e$. By convention $v(0) = \infty$.

For $i \geq 1$ let $M_i = \{f \in M \mid v(f) \geq i\}$ and let $F_i = F \cap (1 + M_i)$ where we have identified F with its image in M . Then (F_i) is a central series for F (cf. [5], sect. 2).

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(Note that if $e = 1$ in the definition of v we have $F_i = \gamma_i(F)$ by a deep result of Magnus, cf. [5], section 3.) If G_i is the image of F_i in G we will show that (G_i) is the required central series.

Lemma 2. *For $i \geq e$ we have $F_i \subseteq \gamma_{[i/e]}(F)$ which shows that $G_i \subseteq \gamma_{[i/e]}(G)$ and hence that $\bigcap G_i = \bigcap \gamma_i(G) = 1$.*

This follows from the fact that if $i = a + eb$ then

$$a + b = (ea + eb)/b \geq (a + eb)/e = i/e$$

and the fact that G is residually nilpotent by Azarov's Theorem.

In order to show that the quotients G_i/G_{i+1} are torsion-free we have to bring into play the Lie ring structure on the graded ring $L(G) = \bigoplus_i (G_i/G_{i+1})$. The Lie ring $L(F) = \bigoplus_i (F_i/F_{i+1})$ is free on $\xi_1, \dots, \xi_m, \eta_1, \dots, \eta_n$ where ξ_i is the image of X_i in F_1/F_2 and η_j is the image of Y_j in F_e/F_{e+1} (cf. [5], section 3). The problem is to determine the kernel of the canonical surjection $L(F) \rightarrow L(G)$. Let ρ be the image of $r = uv^{-1}$ in F_d/F_{d+1} . Since $v \in F_{d+1}$, we have that ρ is also the image of u in F_d/F_{d+1} .

Theorem 3. *The Lie ring $\mathfrak{g} = L(F)/(\rho)$ is torsion-free.*

Theorem 4. *The kernel of $L(F) \rightarrow L(G)$ is $\mathfrak{r} = (\rho)$.*

To prove Theorem 3 we note that since ρ is not a proper multiple of an element of $L(F)$ the Lie algebra $(L(F)/(\rho)) \otimes_{\mathbb{F}_p} \mathbb{F}_p$ is a graded Lie algebra over the finite field \mathbb{F}_p defined by a single non-zero relator of degree d . In [3], théorème 2 we prove that the homogeneous component of degree n of this graded algebra has a finite dimension which depends only on n and d . Since p is an arbitrary prime this proves that the homogeneous components of $\mathfrak{g} = L(F)/(\rho)$ are torsion free. The Theorem of Birkhoff-Witt then shows that the enveloping algebra U of \mathfrak{g} has no zero-divisors which can be used to prove that, via the adjoint representation, $\mathfrak{r}/[\mathfrak{r}, \mathfrak{r}]$ is a free U module generated by the image of ρ (cf. [3], théorème 1). This fact is the key to proving Theorem 4. The proof given in [4] can be easily be adapted to the valuation v used here. For details cf. [5], sections 2 and 3.

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DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICS AND STATISTICS, MCGILL UNIVERSITY, BURNSIDE HALL, 805
SHERBROOKE STREET WEST, MONTREAL QC H3A 0B9, CANADA
E-mail address: labute@math.mcgill.ca